

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MONROV 02888 191732Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----083193 191736Z /41

O R 191650Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9022
INFO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

S E C R E T MONROVIA 2888

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1
TAGS: SHUM, PEPR, GV, LI
SUBJECT: LIBERIAN AND PAPAL NUMCIO INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF
ARCHBISHOP TCHIDIMBO

REF: CONAKRY 0763

1. ARCHBISHOP FRANCIS CARROLL, PAPAL NUNCIO IN LIBERIA,
INFORMED AMBASSADOR CARTER, FOLLOWING CARROLL'S RETURN
FROM CONAKRY, THAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE
INTERVENTIONS FOR ERLEASE OF ARCHBISHOP TCHIDIMBO AND
THAT IT APPEARED LIKELY THAT TCHIDIMBO WOULD BE
RELEASED WITHIN A WEEK OR SO. ON APRIL 19, BEFORE
RECEIPT OF REFTEL, THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR WAS GIVEN

FURTHER DETAILS BY CARROLL. CARROLL SAID THAT TOURE
HAD DEMANDED THAT TCHIDIMBO RESIGN. THE VATICAN
HAD AGREED ON CONDITION THAT TCHIDIMBO BE ALLOWED
TO RESIGN AFTER RELEASE AND IN LIBERIA. AFTER
TOURE REFUSED THIS CONDITION, IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT
TCHIDIMBO BE PERMITTED TO RESIGN AT THE LIBERIAN
EMBASSY IN CONAKRY. CARROLL ANTICIPATES THAT THIS
ARRANGEMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED.

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2. CARROLL DESCRIBED A MEETING WITH TOURE IN WHICH
THE LATTER DELEVERED A TIRADE AGAINST TCHIDIMBO
FOR THIS ALLEGED INVOLVEMTN IN THE 1970 ATTACK. AT THE
END OF THE TIRADE, TOURE ANNOUNCED ABRUPTLY THAT
CARROLL AND FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS WOULD BE PERMITTED
FORTHWITH TO VISIT WITH TCHIDIMBO. CARROLL DESCRIBED
TCHIDIMBO AS DRESSED WELL, APPARENTLY HEALTHY AND IN

GOOD SPIRITS.

3. CARROLL BELIEVES THAT TOURE WANTS TO RELEASE TCHIDIMBO BUT IN AFRICAN FASHION NEEDS TO FIND A FACE-SAVING WAY TO DO SO. HE THUS CONTINUES HIS OUTBURSTS AGAINST TCHIDIMBO'S ALLEGED PERFIDY BUT AT THE SAME TIME IS PREPARED TO MAKE A MAGANIMOUS GESTURE IN RESPONSE TO THE PLEADINGS OF OTHERS. PART OF TOURE'S DEEP EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE TCHIDIMBO CASE ARISES, ACCORDING TO CARROLL, FROM THE FACT THAT HE AND TCHIDIMBO HAD BEEN EXTREMELY CLOSE FRIENDS. WHEN TOURE LEARNED OF TCHIDIMBO'S ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT WITH THE 1970 INVASION, HE THUS WAS THAT MUCH MORE BITTER.

4. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY SECONDS CONAKRY'S URGING THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN REMAIN TIGHTLY HELD WITH REGARD BOTH TO SUBSTANCE AND SOURCES. CARTER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, PRISONERS RELEASE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MONROV02888
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780167-1138
Format: TEL
From: MONROVIA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780440/aaaabhuq.tel
Line Count: 81
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 26878bab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 CONAKRY 763
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2920364
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LIBERIAN AND PAPAL NUMCIO INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF ARCHBISHOP TCHIDIMBO
TAGS: SHUM, PEPR, GV, LI, (TCHIDIMBO, ARCHBISHOP), (TOURE, AHMED SEKOU)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/26878bab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014